Piedmont Photo Club — New Member Guide

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Welcome to Piedmont Photo Club. This guide introduces the club, its regular and periodic activities, the website and member procedures, and the contest program. You do not need to master everything immediately. Start with the Quick Start, attend meetings, and ask questions.

New Member Quick Start

First, get into your website account:

1. Look for two club messages: an introduction that tells you which email address is your website **Login ID**, followed by a separate password-reset email. Check Spam or Junk if you do not see them.
2. Open the **newest** password-reset email from **Piedmont Photo Club** (`piedmontphotoclub@piedmontphotoclub.com`). Click its link, make a private password, and wait for the website to confirm that it was set.
3. Open the club website and select **Member Login** at the top right, or go directly to the login page. Enter the full email address from the introduction as your Login ID and the new password you just made. The reset link is for setting a password; return to the login page to sign in.
4. Open a page from the **Members Only** menu to check that you can reach member pages. If you cannot, use **Contact Us** on the website and say what happened. Never send anyone your password.

Then, get acquainted with the club: Read **Club News** and the **Event Calendar**, come to a meeting, and try the activities that interest you. You do not need to enter a contest to take part. The detailed login steps and help for common problems are under Setting Up Your Website Login.

Table of Contents

1. New Member Quick Start
2. About the Club
3. Club Activities
4. How the Club Communicates
5. Using the Club Website
6. Participating and Sharing Images
7. Why We Hold Contests
8. The Contest Calendar
9. Competition Levels — Intermediate and Advanced
10. Contest Categories Explained
11. Non-Competitive Categories
12. Eligibility and Re-Entering Images
13. Setting Up Your Website Login
14. Submitting Your Images
15. The Anonymous Review Gallery
16. Voting and Judging
17. Winning Criteria — Regular Contests
18. The Year-End Contest
19. Winning Criteria — Year-End Contest
20. Your Member Gallery
21. Quick Reference

About the Club

Piedmont Photo Club is a community for photographers who want to learn, share work, exchange ideas, and enjoy photography with others. Members bring different levels of experience, equipment, interests, and artistic approaches. Participation is intended to encourage growth rather than prescribe one style of photography.

You can benefit from the club without entering contests. Programs, informal image sharing, discussions, and photo shoots are equally valuable ways to participate. If you do enter contests, treat them as another learning opportunity: select work thoughtfully, study how other members approach a subject, and use the results to sharpen your own judgment.

Club Activities

Programs

Program meetings focus on photographic subjects, techniques, creative approaches, presentations, or guest speakers. Check the Event Calendar and club announcements for each program's topic and any advance preparation.

Share And Tell

Share And Tell gives members an informal way to show photographs for discussion and appreciation. These images are not contest entries and are not voted on. When an upload session is available, use **Members Only → Submissions**; the page automatically displays the Share and Tell form and closing information.

Contest Meetings

The club normally holds one regular contest in each quarter and a Year-End contest in the summer. Digital entries are reviewed and voted on through the website. Print entries are brought to the meeting and judged in person.

Photo Shoots

The club periodically organizes photo shoots. The subject, location, date, meeting point, access requirements, and weather plan vary by event. Use the Event Calendar and the latest club message as the authoritative details.

Other Image Discussions

An announced Meeting Upload session may also accept Creative (CRC) or Program (PGM) images. CRC is used primarily for invited presenters or workshops at club meetings designated as Programs; it is not part of Share And Tell and is not used at contest meetings. These are temporary, non-competitive meeting images rather than contest submissions.

How the Club Communicates

Use the following sources together:

- **Club email** — time-sensitive announcements, member instructions, contest openings, voting notices, and schedule changes.
- **Club News** — website announcements and recent club activity.
- **Event Calendar** — meeting dates, programs, contests, and periodic outings.
- **Contests** — current contest status, information and procedures, current results, and the archive.
- **Members Only** — protected operational pages such as submissions, review, voting, and account functions.
- **Contact Us** — questions when you do not know which officer or administrator to contact.
- **Facebook** — an additional public club presence; confirm operational instructions through the website or club email.

Schedules and event details can change. For a specific event, follow the most recent club email and Event Calendar entry.

Using the Club Website

AREA	WHAT YOU WILL FIND
Home	General club introduction and current highlights
Club News	Announcements and recent posts
Contests	Status, information, procedures, results, and archive
Member Galleries	Public galleries of members' finalized contest work
Event Calendar	Upcoming meetings and activities
Contact Us	A way to reach the club

The **Members Only** area contains functions intended for approved current members. Contest submissions, anonymous review, voting, account details, and temporary Meeting Uploads may require you to sign in.

The Contest Archive and Member Galleries are public. You may share those links with family and friends.

The **Contest Status** page summarizes the current contest phase, Theme when applicable, schedule, countdown, meeting date, entry limit, and the action available at that stage. When you are signed in, it can also show your submission or voting progress. Scheduled dates are informative; the current website phase changes only when the contest administrator completes the corresponding action.

Using Submit Club News

Use **Members Only → Submit Club News** when you have a proposed club announcement, member story, program or meeting recap, photo-shoot report, contest news item, or another article for the website. You must be logged in. The form shows the name and email from your website account, so you do not enter them again.

Complete the form as an editorial submission:

1. Confirm the displayed member name and email, then enter the proposed article title and complete article text. Suggested Topic, Short Summary, and Event Date are optional.
2. Optionally upload as many as six JPG, JPEG, or PNG images, no larger than 10 MB each. Upload your preferred Featured Image first.
3. Supply captions, photographer credits, relevant links, and any notes the editor needs.
4. Confirm that you created the submitted material or have permission for Piedmont Photo Club to edit and publish it.
5. Select **Submit for Review** and wait for the on-screen confirmation.

Submitting the form does not publish an article. It sends the material to the club's editorial workflow for review, possible editing, and manual conversion into a WordPress Post. An editor may contact you for clarification and should send you the public link if the article is published. The form currently provides an on-screen confirmation only; it does not send an automatic confirmation email to you.

Use **Contact Us** instead when you have a private question, need account help, or are not proposing material for publication. Do not use **Submit Club News** for contest entries or temporary Share And Tell, Creative, or Program images; use the announced contest or Meeting Upload form for those workflows.

Participating and Sharing Images

You decide how actively you want to participate. Good ways to begin include:

- Attend a program and note one technique or idea you want to try.
- Bring questions about cameras, editing, printing, presentation, or composition.
- Submit an image to Share And Tell when a session is announced.
- Join a photo shoot and compare how different photographers interpret the same location.
- Browse the Contest Archive and Member Galleries to become familiar with the club's work.
- Review contest images carefully, even if you did not enter that contest.
- Volunteer when the club requests help with an activity.

When Share and Tell or Program uploads are open, use **Members Only → Submissions**. The page automatically displays the form for that month's meeting. These temporary images are grouped for the meeting and removed during administrative cleanup; they are not added to your permanent contest gallery.

Why We Hold Contests

Photo contests at Piedmont Photo Club exist first and foremost to encourage growth. Entering a contest means committing to an image — deciding that this photograph is your best work in a given category and standing behind it in front of fellow photographers. That act alone sharpens your eye.

The competition structure also gives you:

- **Honest feedback through voting.** Members vote anonymously, so the results reflect the genuine response of your peers rather than social politeness.
- **A record of your progress.** Every finalized image becomes part of your permanent member gallery on the club website, building a visible history of your photographic journey.
- **A community experience.** Seeing how other members interpret the same theme or category broadens your own creative thinking.

You do not need to win anything to benefit from entering. Consistent participation is the most reliable path to improvement.

The Contest Calendar

The club holds **four regular contests** each year, plus a **Year-End contest** in the summer:

CONTEST	APPROXIMATE MONTH
Regular Contest 1	October
Regular Contest 2	January
Regular Contest 3	April
Regular Contest 4	July
Year-End Contest	August

> ***Note on the October contest:*** *Because the Year-End contest draws from a full year of regular contests, October is treated as the start of a new contest year rather than the end of the previous one. So the October, January, April, and July contests form a single group whose winners all feed into the following August's Year-End contest.*

Each regular contest runs for several weeks from the submission opening date through to results publication. The administrator will announce each phase by email and by posting on the club website.

Contest formats may include open contests where any subject is allowed, Theme contests where entries must fit the announced theme, special-topic contests such as Nature, print competition, and digital image competition. The annual schedule and any themes or special topics will be announced during the club year.

Competition Levels

Most contest categories are divided into two levels: **Intermediate** and **Advanced**. You compete only against entries submitted at the level you select, which keeps the contest fair and meaningful at every stage of a photographer's development. Depending on your experience and comfort level, you may compete at either level — it is your choice. Use the same level for all of your Intermediate/Advanced entries in a contest.

Intermediate

Intermediate is intended for members who are still developing their technical and compositional skills. New members may choose Intermediate, but they are not automatically assigned to it.

Intermediate photographers compete in categories prefixed **DI** (Digital Intermediate) and **PI** (Print Intermediate).

Advanced

Advanced is intended for photographers with greater technical experience and artistic confidence. Experienced new members may choose Advanced. Members who consistently succeed at the Intermediate level are encouraged — but not required — to move to Advanced.

Advanced photographers compete in categories prefixed **DA** (Digital Advanced) and **PA** (Print Advanced).

ART and THM

The **Altered Reality / Digital Art** (ART) and **Theme** (THM) categories are open to all members regardless of level — Intermediate and Advanced photographers compete together in these two categories.

Contest Categories Explained

Choose either the **Intermediate** or **Advanced** level for all of your Intermediate/Advanced entries in a contest.

Level-based categories

INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
DIC — Digital Intermediate Color Digital color photographs	**DAC — Digital Advanced Color** Digital color photographs
DIB — Digital Intermediate Black & White Digital monochrome photographs	**DAB — Digital Advanced Black & White** Digital monochrome photographs
PIC — Print Intermediate Color Physical color prints	**PAC — Print Advanced Color** Physical color prints
PIB — Print Intermediate Black & White Physical monochrome prints	**PAB — Print Advanced Black & White** Physical monochrome prints

Digital categories are displayed and voted on through the website. Print categories are brought to the meeting and judged in person. Prints should be matted, not framed, and meet the size and check-in requirements announced for that contest. Submit a corresponding JPEG through the website for each print entry so it can be identified and archived.

Categories open to all levels

ART — ALTERED REALITY / DIGITAL ART	THM — THEME
Digital images significantly manipulated or composited beyond conventional photographic processing. Creative composites, painterly treatments, surrealism, and similar work belong here.	A digital image that clearly responds to the theme announced for that contest. Maximum **one Theme image per member per contest**.

Intermediate and Advanced members compete together in ART and THM. Ordinary tonal adjustments and light retouching do not by themselves make an image ART.

Non-Competitive Categories

Three categories are shown at club meetings for discussion and appreciation but are **not judged or voted on**. They use the separate temporary **Meeting Uploads** workflow rather than the contest submission form. Images in these categories do not count toward your five-image contest limit and cannot earn Honorable Mention or placement awards.

When a Meeting Upload session is open, you can select several JPEGs together, up to your remaining capacity for that session. The page shows a preview for each selected file. Choose the category and enter the caption separately for every image, and use **Remove** before submitting if an image should not be included. The complete batch is validated together; if one image is invalid or the batch exceeds the available capacity, none of that batch is saved.

After a successful upload, the page shows each saved Meeting Upload as a card with its category, caption, filename, and thumbnail. Those cards are your confirmation; the club does not send a separate confirmation email for Meeting Upload images. Contest submissions use the same saved-card confirmation policy.

Meeting Uploads accept JPEG files up to 25 MB and 100 megapixels. The original files are kept in
private club storage rather than at a public uploads URL. After submission, the page reloads safely;
refreshing it will not submit the same images again.

After submissions close, the club may create web-sized Media Library copies for a dated meeting
gallery. Those gallery copies may have public image URLs; the private full-resolution originals
remain separate and are used for the administrator's grouped ZIP download.

CODE	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
SAT	Share And Tell	Images members share for informal display, discussion, and appreciation at the meeting.
CRC	Creative	Used primarily for invited presenters or workshops at designated Program meetings; separate from Share And Tell and contest meetings.
PGM	Program	Images related to the subject of the month's program or guest speaker.

When one of these sessions is open, **Members Only → Submissions** displays its upload form and closing date. SAT, CRC, and PGM images do **not** enter contest processing, the anonymous review gallery, the voting ballot, contest results, or permanent member galleries. They are retained temporarily for the meeting and removed when the administrator completes cleanup.

Eligibility and Re-Entering Images

Every contest image must be your own work. The image must be conceived, composed, and photographed by you, and all editing must be completed by you or under your direct supervision. The original photograph must have been captured within the contest eligibility period — currently within the last **three years**.

Submit images without watermarks. Choose a descriptive title or caption that complements the image. You do not need to follow a special filename convention; the contest system names and organizes the image automatically.

By entering, you grant Piedmont Photo Club the right to display the image on the club website. You retain all other rights to your photograph.

The following re-entry rules apply to regular contests:

- An image judged meritorious may not be entered again in another regular club contest.
- A meritorious image becomes eligible for the annual Image of the Year or Best-of-the-Year competition, implemented on the website as the Year-End Contest.
- An image that is not judged meritorious may be entered one more time in a later regular contest.
- An image may be entered no more than **two times total** in regular competition.

Setting Up Your Website Login

The club creates your website account. You do not need to register or ask anyone to choose a password for you. The club will send an introduction with your registered email address, then a separate message with a link for making your own password.

Establish your private password

1. Find the club's introductory email. It tells you the **exact email address** to use as your website Login ID. Keep it handy.
2. Find the separate password-reset email from **Piedmont Photo Club** (`piedmontphotoclub@piedmontphotoclub.com`). If you received several, open only the **newest** one. An older link may no longer work.
3. Click the link in that email. On the website page it opens, type a new password that meets the requirements shown there, then submit it. Keep this password private. Wait for the website's confirmation that your password was set.
4. Leave the reset page. Open the club website and select **Member Login** at the top right. You can also open the login page directly.
5. Enter the **full registered email address** from the introduction as your Login ID. Type the new password you just created and sign in. Your name, a nickname, or another email address may not work.
6. Open a page from the **Members Only** menu and open the **Account** page to confirm you can reach them. When you are done, use **Log Out**, then try signing in again with your new password so you know it works.

The reset-email link is for **creating a password**, not for later logins. Use **Member Login** whenever you return to the website. No club volunteer or administrator needs to know your password.

If something does not work

WHAT HAPPENED	WHAT TO DO
You did not receive one or both messages	Check Spam, Junk, Promotions, and any email quarantine. If you still cannot find them, use **Contact Us** on the club website. Give the email address the club should have on file, but do not send a password.
The reset link says it is invalid or expired	Use the link in the **newest** reset email. If that also fails, ask the club for one fresh reset message. Each new message can invalidate an older link.
The website confirmed your password, but you cannot sign in	Open the login page rather than the reset link. Check that you entered the full registered email address and the new password, not an older saved password filled in by your browser.
You see a security block or repeated login failures	Stop trying and contact the club through **Contact Us**. Tell them the exact message you see so they can help clear the block.
You can sign in but cannot open a members-only page	Contact the club through **Contact Us**. Include the page you tried to open and the email address you used to sign in.

Submitting Your Images

Contest submission requires your approved member account. Log in through `https://www.piedmontphotoclub.com/login/` before opening the submission page. The system identifies the photographer from the signed-in account; do not submit through another member's login.

Submit one image at a time

When the club announces that submissions are open:

1. Sign in, then follow **Submit Your Images** in the club's announcement or open the Submissions page. If the page says submissions are closed, check the announcement dates or ask the club for help.
2. In **Category**, choose the category for this image. For an Intermediate or Advanced category, choose the level you plan to use for this contest. If you are entering a physical print, choose its print category and also bring the print to the meeting.
3. In **Caption**, type the title you want shown with the image. Check the spelling before you send it.
4. Select the image upload control and choose a **JPEG** from your device. The filename can be ordinary; the website will rename the file for the contest.
5. Select **Submit Image** once and wait for the page to respond. Look for **"Thank you! Your image has been received."** and confirm that the image appears in **My Contest Submissions**.
6. Repeat these steps for each additional image, up to the contest limit. Check the Category and Caption each time.

If the page shows an error or never confirms receipt, do not assume the image was accepted. Save the message you see and use **Contact Us** before submitting the same file repeatedly. Include the contest date, category, and caption; never send your password.

How many can you enter?

You may submit up to **four non-Theme entries** among the contest's available categories, using either the Intermediate or Advanced level where applicable. You may also submit **one** Theme (THM) entry, making five entries total only when one of them is Theme. Non-competitive category images (SAT, CRC, PGM) use Meeting Uploads and do not count toward the contest limit.

File requirements

ITEM	GUIDANCE
Format	JPEG only (required)
Color space	sRGB recommended for predictable website display
Dimensions	At least 2880 pixels on the longest side recommended
JPEG quality	About 80–85% recommended

The upload validator requires a real JPEG file. It does not reject an otherwise valid JPEG solely because its color profile, pixel dimensions, or saved quality differs from these recommendations. The system automatically creates the additional versions needed for the review gallery, voting ballot, and final results gallery; smaller originals are not enlarged.

Captions

You will be asked to give each image a title (caption). Take this seriously — a good title adds context and can enhance how viewers engage with your image. The title is embedded permanently in your image's metadata and appears in the results gallery alongside your name.

What happens after you submit?

After the page confirms receipt, the website saves your image and displays a card with its category, caption, filename, and private thumbnail. That saved card is your confirmation; no separate submission email is sent. Do not upload the same image again merely because no email arrived.

While submissions remain open, a card for an image you submitted directly through the website provides three controls:

- **Edit category and caption** changes those details while continuing to enforce the contest's entry and competition-level rules.
- **Replace image** uploads a corrected JPEG and caption in place of the current file without using another contest slot.
- **Withdraw entry** removes the active image and makes that contest slot available again. The withdrawn record remains in the private history for accountability.

Review the named image and caption carefully before replacing or withdrawing it. Administrator-assisted or imported entries may appear in your list but remain read-only. All entries become read-only after submissions close.

Submit every entry by the announced deadline. Late, incomplete, or noncompliant entries may be disqualified when necessary to keep the contest on schedule.

The Anonymous Review Gallery

Before or alongside voting, the club opens an **anonymous review gallery** on the website. This gallery shows the eligible digital entries—ART, DAB, DAC, DIB, DIC, and THM—identified only by a sequence number and category; no photographer names are shown. Print entries remain valid contest submissions but are excluded from Critical Review because they are judged in person at the meeting.

The purpose of anonymity is to remove social bias from the review process. You can study every image on its own merits without knowing whether it was taken by a new member, a long-time member, or yourself.

How images are ordered: Within each category, the sequence numbers are assigned in a randomised order — no two images by the same photographer appear side by side. This means the order you see in the gallery is neither alphabetical by name nor chronological by submission time.

You can visit the review gallery as many times as you like and on any device while it is open. It remains accessible throughout the voting period.

Voting and Judging

Regular contests are usually judged by club members. Certain contests may instead use a guest judge or a panel of judges, who may use their own methods and criteria unless the announced contest format specifies otherwise.

Online voting (digital categories)

You will receive a club email with voting instructions when voting opens. The voting link may lead to the PPC website ballot or an announced external form.

1. If the voting email includes **Review Gallery**, select it to look through the anonymous images. You can return to the gallery before sending your ballot.
2. Select **Cast Your Vote** in that email. Sign in if the voting page asks you to. Read the instructions shown on the ballot; the club may use its website ballot or a linked voting form for a particular contest.
3. Make your choices in each digital category and check them before submitting. The ballot shows or enforces the allowed number of selections for each category.
4. Select **Submit Ballot** on the PPC website ballot, or the submit control on an announced external form, and wait for its confirmation. If you see an error instead, keep the exact message and contact the club.

How many votes do you have per category?

The number of votes available in each category is proportional to the number of entries:

- **Digital categories** (ART, DAB, DAC, DIB, DIC, THM): approximately **25% of the images entered** in that category, minimum 1 vote
- The ballot enforces the limit automatically — you cannot over-vote

If 12 images were entered in DIB, you would have approximately 3 votes for that category.

Treat your submitted ballot as final. On the PPC website ballot, your choices cannot be changed after **Submit Ballot** succeeds. Take time to review the images and your selections before submitting any ballot.

In-person voting (print categories)

Print categories are judged at the club meeting, where members can see and handle the physical prints. Online ballot voting does not apply to print categories.

Winning Criteria — Regular Contests

Honorable Mention

In regular contests, the award is **Honorable Mention (HM)**. There are no 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place designations in regular contests — all winners receive equal recognition as Honorable Mentions.

The number of Honorable Mentions awarded per category is determined by the vote totals and the club's winner percentage guidelines:

- Approximately the **top 25%** of digital entries by vote count receive HM
- Approximately the **top 50%** of print entries (by in-person judging) receive HM

The administrator reviews the vote tallies after voting closes and designates the final Honorable Mentions. The percentages are guidelines; the number selected may vary with the number of entries and the actual vote distribution.

What makes an image an Honorable Mention?

Because voting is conducted by members rather than a single external judge, Honorable Mention reflects the **collective response of your peers** — the images that resonated most broadly across the membership. Members generally respond to images that demonstrate:

- **Technical quality** — sharp focus where intended, appropriate exposure, clean processing
- **Compositional strength** — effective use of framing, leading lines, balance, and visual flow
- **Impact** — an immediate emotional or aesthetic response; the image holds your attention
- **Subject clarity** — a clear primary subject that commands the frame
- **Creativity** — a fresh perspective, unexpected angle, or distinctive interpretation

No single criterion guarantees a win. A technically perfect but ordinary image may receive fewer votes than a slightly imperfect but emotionally striking one. The goal is to make photographs that move people.

Does winning an HM in a regular contest carry forward?

Yes — in two important ways:

1. Your Honorable Mention is embedded permanently in your image's metadata and displayed with a badge in your results gallery and your personal member gallery.
2. Your HM image is automatically entered into the **Year-End Contest** (see below).

The Year-End Contest

What is it?

Each August the club holds its annual Image of the Year or Best-of-the-Year competition, implemented on the website as the **Year-End Contest**. It uses the Honorable Mention winners from all four regular contests held that year. This is the club's most prestigious competition — the best images from the year going head to head for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Place in each category.

Do I need to do anything to enter?

No. If you earned an Honorable Mention in any regular contest during the contest year, your winning image is automatically entered into the Year-End contest on your behalf. You do not submit anything.

Who is eligible?

Any member who earned an Honorable Mention in a regular contest during the contest year is automatically entered. This applies to both Intermediate and Advanced levels and to all categories including ART and THM.

Year-End voting — ranked ballots

Year-End voting is different from regular contest voting. Instead of selecting a set of images, you **rank three images per category**:

- Your **1st choice** — the image you consider the best in that category
- Your **2nd choice** — your second favourite
- Your **3rd choice** — your third favourite

You must rank all three positions in every category before your ballot can be submitted (or rank all images in any category that has fewer than three entries). You can adjust your rankings freely until you click Submit.

Scoring:

RANK	POINTS
1st choice	3 points
2nd choice	2 points
3rd choice	1 point

Each image accumulates points from all member ballots. The administrator reviews the final scores and designates the winners.

Winning Criteria — Year-End Contest

Awards

In the Year-End contest, three placement awards are given per category:

AWARD	DESCRIPTION
🥇 First Place	The image with the highest weighted score in the category
🥈 Second Place	The image with the second-highest weighted score
🥉 Third Place	The image with the third-highest weighted score

All three winners receive equal public recognition in the results gallery and in their member gallery, with the placement badge permanently displayed on the image.

At the annual awards event, winning images are announced and viewed, and awards for First, Second, and Third Place in each category are presented. Ties are resolved by awarding additional trophies.

What makes a Year-End winner?

Year-End images have already proven themselves — each one earned Honorable Mention in a regular contest, so they have already demonstrated quality in the eyes of the membership. In the Year-End vote you are being asked to make finer distinctions: among all the images that were good enough to win this year, which are the very best?

Members tend to rank images that:

- **Stand out in memory** — after seeing all the entries in a category, which images stay with you?
- **Show mastery** — images where every technical and artistic decision feels intentional
- **Have a distinctive voice** — a personal perspective or signature quality that sets them apart
- **Reward repeated viewing** — images that reveal more the longer you look at them

Because Year-End contestants have already won once, the bar is higher. An image that won HM comfortably in October may face very strong competition in August from images that won HM in January, April, and July.

Can the same member win multiple places?

Yes. If a member entered multiple regular contests and earned multiple HM awards during the year, they could have more than one image in the Year-End contest — and potentially win multiple placement awards in different categories or even in the same category.

Your Member Gallery

One of the most rewarding features of the club's contest system is the **personal member gallery** on the club website. Every image you submit that is finalized in a contest becomes part of your permanent gallery, building over time into a record of your photographic work with the club.

What does the gallery show?

Your member gallery displays your finalized contest images from the active **rolling multi-year gallery window** (three years by default), grouped and browsable through a full image gallery. Each image shows:

- Your full caption (title)
- The contest and category it was entered in
- A **winner badge** if the image earned an award:
    - *Honorable Mention* — for regular contest winners
    - *1st Place / 2nd Place / 3rd Place* — for Year-End contest winners

How does it get built?

You do not have to do anything. When the administrator finalizes each contest, the system:

1. Writes your name, caption, category, and any winner designation directly into each image file as embedded metadata (both IPTC and XMP standards)
2. Registers your images in the club's WordPress Media Library with full tagging
3. Either creates your personal gallery page (if this is your first contest) or updates it automatically with your new images

Your gallery page is nested under the **Member Galleries** section of the website and is accessible by any website visitor. The URL is based on your name (for example, `piedmontphotoclub.com/member-galleries/your-name/`).

Three-year rolling window

The gallery uses a rolling contest-year window of approximately three years. Because the contest year starts in October while stored image tags use calendar years, the gallery may query an additional boundary calendar-year tag so October-through-December images are not omitted. Older images remain stored in the system even when they fall outside the active gallery view.

> *Remember: the contest year begins in October, so the displayed calendar-year span may not match three January-to-December calendar years exactly.*

Why does embedded metadata matter?

The metadata written into your image files means your authorship and award information is permanently recorded inside the file itself — not just in a database. If you download an image from the club's Media Library, that file carries your name, caption, category, contest date, and any winner designation wherever it goes. This is standard professional practice (IPTC and XMP are the same metadata standards used by news agencies and stock photo libraries).

Viewing your gallery

1. Go to **Member Galleries** and find your name in the list
2. Select your gallery card, or go directly to your personal gallery page

No login is required to view member galleries. You can share your gallery URL with family, friends, or anyone you would like to show your work to.

The central Member Galleries directory shows cards only for current eligible club participants. If your membership or website approval becomes inactive, your directory card may disappear, but your gallery Page and historical contest images are preserved. Restoring eligibility restores the published directory card unless the Page was separately placed in Draft.

Quick Reference

Your First Few Weeks

TASK	WHERE OR HOW
Establish your login	Read the introductory email for your Login ID, use the newest reset email to create a password, then open **Member Login** to sign in
Check upcoming activities	Event Calendar and the latest club email
Read announcements	Club News
Propose an article or announcement	Members Only → Submit Club News
Learn about contests	Contests menu and this guide
See members' work	Member Galleries and Contest Archive
Share a discussion image	Open **Members Only** → **Submissions** when a Share and Tell or Program upload session is announced
Ask for help	Ask at a meeting or use Contact Us

Regular Contest at a Glance

STAGE	WHAT HAPPENS	ACTION REQUIRED FROM YOU
Account Setup	Club creates and approves your member account	Use the newest reset link to create your private password, then open **Member Login** and sign in with your registered email address
Submissions Open	Email and post on website	Submit up to four non-Theme entries plus one optional Theme entry; review your saved cards and edit, replace, or withdraw eligible direct entries before closing
Submissions Close	Admin closes the form	None
Images Processed	Admin runs image processing	None
Review Gallery Open	Anonymous digital gallery live on website	Browse ART, digital, and Theme entries (optional but recommended); print entries are judged at the meeting
Voting Open	Email and post on website	Log in and cast your ballot
Voting Closes	Admin closes the ballot	None
Results Published	Email and post on website	View results gallery; your gallery updates automatically

Year-End Contest at a Glance

STAGE	WHAT HAPPENS	ACTION REQUIRED FROM YOU
Entries Seeded	Your HM images auto-entered	None — no submission needed
Voting Open	Email and post on website	Log in and cast your **ranked ballot** (1st / 2nd / 3rd per category)
Results Published	Email and post on website	View results; placement badges added to your member gallery

Categories at a Glance

CODE	FULL NAME	LEVEL	MEDIUM	COMPETITIVE
DIC	Digital Intermediate Color	Intermediate	Digital	Yes
DIB	Digital Intermediate Black & White	Intermediate	Digital	Yes
DAC	Digital Advanced Color	Advanced	Digital	Yes
DAB	Digital Advanced Black & White	Advanced	Digital	Yes
ART	Altered Reality / Digital Art	All levels	Digital	Yes
THM	Theme	All levels	Digital	Yes (max 1/contest)
PIC	Print Intermediate Color	Intermediate	Print	Yes (in-person)
PIB	Print Intermediate Black & White	Intermediate	Print	Yes (in-person)
PAC	Print Advanced Color	Advanced	Print	Yes (in-person)
PAB	Print Advanced Black & White	Advanced	Print	Yes (in-person)
SAT	Share And Tell	All levels	Digital	No
CRC	Creative	All levels	Digital	No
PGM	Program	All levels	Digital	No

Award Summary

CONTEST TYPE	AWARD	HOW DETERMINED
Regular (digital)	Honorable Mention	Top ~25% by member vote
Regular (print)	Honorable Mention	Top ~50% by in-person judging
Year-End	1st, 2nd, 3rd Place per category	Weighted ranked vote (1st=3pts, 2nd=2pts, 3rd=1pt)

Questions?

Ask questions at a meeting or use the website's **Contact Us** page when you are unsure where to begin. For login problems, identify the email address associated with your membership, but never send anyone your password. For a contest question, include the contest date, category, and the exact message shown on the website.

Welcome to Piedmont Photo Club. We look forward to seeing what you create and to having you participate in the club.